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A N
EXHORTATION
TO
CHASTITY.



L O N D O N :

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A N
E X H O R T A T I O N
T O
C H A S T I T Y.

HERE is scarce any one Vice
 T against which there is so much
 said in the New Testament, as
 against that of *Uncleanness*: And
 yet, through the Dissoluteness of the
 Age, there is hardly any that is more
 common, or made more light of, by
 the Generality of the World. It cannot
 therefore but be a Piece of great Charity
 to the Souls of Men, to set forth the Mi-
 sery which follows, both in this World
 and the next, from the Commission of
 it. And I pray God to assist those guilty
 Persons who shall read this, with the
 Light and Influence of his holy Spirit,
 that they may thereby be brought to a
 due Shame and Sorrow for their past Life,
 and to a firm Resolution to *go and sin no
 more*:—And that it may be also of use to
 those who are yet *untainted with the cor-
 ruption which is in the world through Lust*,
 by warning them in Time to avoid those
 Rocks, whereon the Lewd and De-
 bauched have split, to the Ruin of their
 Bodies and Souls.

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I beg therefore the following Particulars may be seriously considered.

First, That the Sin of Uncleanness is an Offence against *Reason* and the Judgment of our Minds. It is a Violation of that natural Modesty and Shamefacedness, which God our Maker has so wrought into our Frame, that we must even put a Force upon ourselves, and harden our Faces, before we can consent to commit any Act of Lewdness. Hence it is, that this sort of Sinners, being conscious to themselves of the natural Deformity of their Actions, seek for Privacy and Obscurity, in order to conceal themselves from the View of the World; as *Job* has observed, chap. xxiv. 15, 16, 17. *The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me, and disguiseth his face; in the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the day-time: They know not the light, for the morning is to them even as the shadow of death; if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.*

2. In the next place, It is a Sin most directly and in the highest Degree contrary to your *Christian Profession*; which

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requires strict Purity of Heart and Soul, and teaches you to keep the Body in Temperance, Soberness, and Chastity: As you may read in the following Places; 1 Theff. iv. 3, &c. *This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles, which know not God: For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness, Rom. xii. 1. I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, 1 Cor. vi. 13, 15, to the End. The body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What, know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two (saith he) shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord, is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doth, is without the body; but he that committeth fornication,*

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sinneth against his own body. What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. The Christian Religion not only forbids all lewd *Actions*, but likewise lays a Restraint upon our *Mouths*, that no immodest Word proceed thence. *Coloss. iii. 8. Put away filthy communication out of your mouth. Ephes. iv. 29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. Ch. v. 3, 4. But fornication, and all uncleanness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints: Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks.* And not only so, but the Gospel requires Chastity of *Thought*, and checking every loose Desire. And indeed it greatly concerns you to set a Watch over your Thoughts, and to guard all the Motions of the Heart, because the Heart is the Spring of all your Words and Actions: From unchaste Thoughts

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Thoughts naturally proceed immodest Words and unclean Actions ; and therefore our Saviour, who knew what was in Man, forbids the indulging and taking Pleasure in such Thoughts ; and directly charges them with the Guilt of Sin ; as we read, *Matt. v. 27, 28. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

3. Farther, It is a Sin which *debases* the Dignity of our Nature, and most of all others *corrupts* the Soul. For this Reason it is that St Peter so earnestly exhorts, *Dearly beloved*, says he, *I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul,* 1 Pet. ii. 11. Fleshly Lusts are said to war against the Soul, because they, above all others, tend to extinguish in our Minds all Sense of Virtue and Religion, all sober Thoughts ; and not only make us altogether unmindful of a future State, but indeed utterly disqualify us for that holy Place, into which nothing that defileth can enter. This Sin taints and corrupts the Imagination,

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inflames the Passions, enfeebles the noble Faculties of the Mind, clouds the Understanding, depraves the Will, and so wholly possesses the Thoughts, that it takes them off, not only from the Duties of Religion, but also from that necessary Care and Industry, which every one ought to exercise in their several Callings and Conditions of Life. And when all Thoughtfulness and Consideration is thus extinguished, it hurries Men on to be governed by mad and brutish Appetites; and so renders them more like Beasts, than rational Creatures, made in the Image and for the Service of God.

4. This Sin is commonly attended with *many others*, and leads the deluded Sinner on by fatal Steps to the Commission of the *most heinous and detestable Vices*. It not only makes them idle, and neglect their own Business, but at the same time pushes them on to Luxury and Extravagance; and then, to support and conceal their vicious and profuse Way of Living, tempts them to Theft and Robbery, to Lying and Perjury, and at length sometimes to commit the crying Sin of Murder, even the unnatural

tural Murder of their own Children, to cover the Shame of the guilty Parents.

5. Of all the Snares the Devil lays for the Simple and Unwary, no one entangles more than this ; of all Sins no one sears the Sinner's Conscience more, or makes them more deaf to good Advice. The dangerous Nature and Tendency of this Vice is well set forth by Solomon in the following Passages, *Prov. ii. 18, 19. The house of the strange woman inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life. Ch. v. 3—6. The lips of a strange woman drop as an honey-comb, and her mouth is smother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword: Her feet go down to death, her steps take hold of hell. Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them. Chap. vii. 25, 26, 27. Let not thine heart incline to her ways, go not astray in her paths: For she hath cast down many wounded; yea many strong men have been slain by her: Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death. Eccles. vii. 26. I find more bitter than death, the woman whose*

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heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be taken by her. What renders the Condition of such Sinners still more dangerous is, that this Vice grieves the holy Spirit of God, by whose Influences Christians are renewed and sanctified, and causes him to depart from them, and leave them under the Dominion of the Devil and their own Lusts. 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.* When Men are thus forsaken of God, and by a long Continuance in impudent Practices have stupified their Consciences, no Wonder they become such as St Paul describes, Ephes. iv. 19. *Who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.* This should lead you to consider before it is too late; to check your unlawful Desires, to break off from your lewd Courses, and not to suffer yourselves to go on in the Way that leads to Destruction, *as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool*

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fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike through your liver, as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life, Prov. vii. 22, 23.

6. The *Consequences* of indulging this Sin, even in this Life, are very *dreadful*. It robs the Sinner of every thing which is valuable and desirable in this World; his Substance, his Reputation, his Peace, his Health, and many times even Life itself: And in the room of these, subjects him to Poverty and Distress, to the Contempt of his Acquaintance, and Abhorrence of all sober People; to public Disgrace, and the Rod of the Magistrate; to the bitter Reflections of a tortured Mind on his past Guilt and Folly; and very often to such loathsome Diseases as either shorten his Days, or make Life itself a Burden. Many there are in the World, who have found by sad Experience the following Observations of Solomon to be true: *By means of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread; and the adulterers will hunt for the precious life. Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt? So is he that goeth in to his*
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neighbour's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent. Whoso committeth adultery with a woman, lacketh understanding: he that doth it destroyeth his own soul: A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away, Prov. vi. 26, 27, &c. Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth; remove thy way far from the strange woman, and come not nigh the door of her house; lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel; lest strangers be filled with thy wealth, and thy labours be in the house of a stranger; and thou mourne at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof? and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me? Prov. v. 7, 8, to 13. And to the same Purpose, Job xxxi. 9, 11, 12. If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door; this is an heinous crime, yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges: For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all my increase.

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And now, if these are the sad Consequences which naturally follow this Sin, how justly may the Folly of every Offender in this kind be upbraided in those forcible Words of God himself by the Prophet *Jeremy*, Chap. ii. 17, 19. *Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God? Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; know therefore and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.*

7. Lastly, It is a Sin, which, unless timely repented of and thoroughly forsaken, exposes Men to the severest Judgments of God in the World to come. Terrible are the Threatnings contained in Scripture against this Vice, as you may read in the following Texts; 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. *Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, shall inherit the kingdom of God.* Gal. v. 19. *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such-like; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past,*
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that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Ephes. v. 6. This ye know, that no whoremonger nor unclean person hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Colos. iii. 5, 6. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence; for which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience. Heb. xiii. 4. Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge; and so judge, that they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death, Rev. xxi. 8.

In these Passages of Scripture you see the Wrath of God is very plainly denounced against these Sins; and if you have been guilty of them, your own Consciences will witness against you, and tell you, that you have deserved these sore and terrible Judgments of God, which there is no Way left for you to escape, but by a speedy Repentance, and thorough Amendment of your Life. Now
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consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you: Take Warning by what you may have already suffered; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto you: You have perhaps experienced already in yourselves, and seen in your wretched Companions, some of the sad Consequences of a lewd and vicious Life: But how little is all you can suffer in this World, in Comparison of what all impenitent Sinners must suffer at the Hands of an almighty and angry God, in that great and terrible Day, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power?
2 Thes. i. 7, 8, 9. When this great Day of his Wrath is come, how will you be able to stand? How will you abide that dreadful Sentence of your Great Judge: *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels?* And yet in vain will it be for you to call on the Mountains and Rocks to *hide you from the face of him*
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that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, be persuaded to flee from the wrath to come. Let your flesh tremble for fear of him, and be afraid of his Judgments. Fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts. Put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts: and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; but as ye have heretofore yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto holiness.

To make this Advice more effectual, here are added some Directions to assist you in the Practice of your Duty.

1. Be on your Guard against the *Approaches* to this Sin; and resist the first *Motions of unclean Desires* in your Minds: Extinguish the smallest Sparks, lest they kindle the Fire of Lust in you. Let
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not the Woman listen to the fair Speeches of the Man that would beguile her ; and let the Man arm himself with the same Caution against the enticing Looks and the *flattery of the tongue of a strange woman : Lust not after her beauty in thine heart, neither let her take thee with her eye-lids*, Prov. vi. 24, 25. Carefully shun all *Temptations*, and abstain from every thing which is apt to lead you into the Snare. Avoid all ill Company, remembering Solomon's Advice, (*Prov. i. 10.*) *My Son*, says he, *if sinners entice thee, consent thou not* ; especially, avoid the Company of such as have formerly led you astray. *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not into the way of evil men ; avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away*, Prov. iv. 14, 15. Refrain from all lewd Behaviour, immodest Gestures, lascivious Discourses, foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient. Shun all immodest Books, Songs, and Pictures, and every Thing which may tend to raise impure Desires and lustful Thoughts in your Minds. Unclean Desires partake of the Guilt of unclean Actions ; they naturally lead us to the Commission of them, and
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are expressly forbid by the Gospel of Christ. Abstain from all *Intemperance* and *Excess*; it is our Lord's Advice, *Luke xxi. 34. Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness.* And the Apostle says, *Rom. xiii. 13, 14. Let us walk honestly as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness.* Learn to keep your Bodies in Temperance, as the best way to keep them in Chastity; and make not Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof. Beware of *Idleness* and *Sloth*, and apply yourselves with Diligence to some honest Trade or Employment for your Support and Maintenance, which will be a Means of keeping you out of the way of Temptations, and help you to escape the Snare, which is so fatal to the Slothful and Intemperate. It is the common Plea of lewd Women, that their Wants and Necessities first led them into such a licentious Way of living: But this is a wicked and a false Pretence. It was the Love of Sensuality, it was Idleness, and an Aversion to honest Labour, which first corrupted their Minds, then betrayed them
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into a vicious and lewd course of Life; out of which nothing is so likely to reclaim them, as resolving to betake themselves to some honest, though it be a laborious, pains-taking Way of getting their Bread.

2. Never think with *Pleasure* on any of your *past Crimes*; but whenever you call them to Remembrance, let it be with Abhorrence and Detestation. Reflect with Shame and Sorrow upon the sinful Aggravations of your Guilt and Folly, when you forsook the Guide of your Youth, and forgot the Covenant of your God; how greatly you have offended him, abused your Bodies, polluted your Souls, and exposed yourselves to his dreadful Vengeance. These Reflections will put you upon good Resolutions, and help to strengthen them.

3. Let your chief *Conversation* be with Persons of sober and orderly Behaviour, and exercise yourselves frequently in *religious Duties*, such as attending the public Worship of God, reading good Books, Meditation on divine and spiritual Things; especially, accustom yourselves to think often, That you are continually in the Presence of the great God;

God; that your most private Actions and your very Thoughts are known to Him, *who is about your path, and about your bed, and spieth out all your ways,* Psalm cxxxix. 3. *For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings: There is no darkness nor shadow of death, where the workers of Iniquity may hide themselves,* Job xxxiv. 21, 22. These Considerations will help to preserve you from secret Wickedness, and when you are assaulted with Temptations, will suggest to your Minds that Saying of Joseph, *How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* Genesis xxxix. 9.

4. There is yet a farther Remedy against *Uncleanness*; — namely, that of lawful Marriage. If the solemn Contract be undertaken and fulfilled in the *Fear of God*, there is then every Prospect that can improve or delight, which can secure a Man's Conscience, or his Happiness. It preserves him Innocent, sweetens Care, and provides a Consolation against the necessary Troubles of Life. And notwithstanding what Libertines say, that they cannot afford the extraordinary Expences of a married Life,

Life, I believe it will be found by constant Experience, that a Man who has engaged in the marriage State, upon the proper Motives of Prudence and Virtue, will live more comfortably, nay will better thrive in the World, than one of the same Rank and Fortune, who indulges himself in the promiscuous Use of Women. Marriage is a Spur to Industry and Sobriety, makes a Man diligent in his Calling, and delivers him from the heavy Mischiefs of vagrant Lusts before described, and from those expensive Temptations, which eat up a Man's Fortune as does a Canker. And there is no doubt, but God Almighty, who *feeds the ravens that call upon him*, will bless his own Institutions, and (if we are not wanting to ourselves) will give us *all things necessary for life and godliness*, in such a Manner as is most fit and convenient for us. And was even the Objection truly founded, (since we came into this World merely to fit us for a better) it were better to be poor *here*, than damned *hereafter*.

5. Above all, *pray* continually and fervently to Almighty God, humbly confessing your Sins to him, and earnestly

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ly imploring his holy Spirit to direct and guide you in all your Ways, to assist and strengthen you against all the Temptations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, and especially against the Sin that most easily besets you; and to enable you to walk in his holy Laws to your Life's End. For the Assistance of those who have unhappily failed in this necessary Duty, here are added two short Prayers fitted to their Condition.

For Pardon and Sanctification.

O Lord God, thou art most holy, and hatest all Iniquity; I blush and am ashamed to lift up my Eyes to thee, when I consider my own Uncleaness and Vileness, when I think how wicked I have been; how contrary I have acted to the Dictates of my own Reason, and the Commands of thy holy Word; how shamefully I have been guilty of such foul Vices, as ought not so much as to be named among Christians. Forgive me, I beseech thee, my manifold and most heinous Offences, for thy Son *Jesus Christ's* Sake, who came into the World to seek and to save that which was lost,
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and to lay down his Life for Sinners. Have Mercy upon me a miserable Sinner; grant me the renewing Grace of thy holy Spirit; enable me to check my loose and impure Desires; to subdue every evil Inclination; to cleanse myself from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit; and to perfect Holiness in the Fear of God: That being made free from Sin, I may become the Servant of Righteousness; and living always in Obedience to thy Commands, may enjoy thy Favour and Blessing in this Life, and everlasting Happiness in the Life to come, through the Merits and Mediation of my Saviour *Jesus Christ*. Amen.

For Assistance against Temptation.

O Almighty and most merciful Father, who hast taught us that thou temptest no Man to Evil, but that we are then tempted, when we are drawn away of our own Lusts and enticed; Grant me, I beseech thee, thy Grace to withstand the Temptations of my own corrupt Nature, that my Flesh being subdued to the Spirit, I may ever obey thy godly Motions in Righteousness and
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true Holiness. O Lord, leave me not in the Hour of Temptation to myself; suffer me not to be governed by my own wicked and sensual Appetites, but let thy Grace be sufficient for me: Do thou work in me both to will and to do of thy good Pleasure, that so I may be enabled to work out my own Salvation with Fear and Trembling; make me to go in the Path of thy Commandments, turn away mine Eyes from beholding Vanity, and quicken thou me in thy Way; help me to refrain my Feet from every evil Way, that I may keep thy Word: When the Wicked lay a Snare for me; let me not err from thy Precepts: Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe; order my Steps in thy Word, and let not any Wickedness have Dominion over me. And grant that henceforth, fleeing Fornication and all youthful Lusts, and working with my Hands the Thing that is good, I may by an honest and laborious Industry be preserved from the Snare of the Tempter, and live in Obedience to thy holy Will and Commandments all the Days of my Life, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord.

Amen.

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